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**CHICAGO AREA MAN INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY
LYING TO FBI ABOUT DOMESTIC TERRORISM HOAX**

CHICAGO – A Chicago area man was indicted on federal charges for allegedly lying to FBI agents last summer about a domestic terrorism hoax to blow up the headquarters of a company in the United States. The defendant, **Gilbert Romero**, was charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury late yesterday following an investigation by agents of the FBI-led Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced today.

Romero, 30, whose last known address was in Northlake, and who is currently in state custody, was charged with two counts of making false statements and one count of reporting a hoax terrorism threat. He will be arraigned at a later date in U.S. District Court.

According to the indictment, on June 1, 2005, Romero conveyed false information to FBI agents that: he knew about a terrorist plot in which Individual A planned to blow up the headquarters of Company A using an explosive device; Individual B had access to bomb-making materials that could be provided to Individual A to assist with the terrorist plot; and

he recently heard from Individual A that Individual A was recruiting individuals for the commission of a terrorist attack on United States soil.

Romero's claims immediately caused the FBI to investigate the credibility of the information he provided, Mr. Grant said.

"We take extremely seriously any threat of terrorism against U.S. citizens and domestic targets," Mr. Grant said. "We also take an equally serious view of hoaxes that cause us to investigate claims that the person reporting the threat knows are false. We will seek to prosecute any individuals who create such a hoaxes and lie about them to agents."

On June 15, 2005, Romero allegedly told agents the following lies: that he had learned that Individual B had access to bomb-making materials because Individual B used to live on a farm; that he knew that Individual B had made bombs in the past; and that he had learned from Individual B that Individual B knew how to make a bomb in a car using brake fluid and chlorine tablets and would provide these materials to Romero in exchange for drugs.

On June 29, 2005, Romero allegedly made false statements to agents in saying that he was a principal participant, together with Individuals A, B, C and D, in the planning to blow up the headquarters of Company A, and that he and the other participants in the terrorist plot planned to finance their operation by either using the proceeds from a pending medical malpractice lawsuit involving Romero's mother or by holding currency exchange and jewelry store owners hostage to extort ransom money from their families. Romero also allegedly provided false information that the plan to blow up the headquarters of Company A was to be executed by loading a truck with 55 gallon drums that would be filled with ammonium

nitrate and diesel fuel and detonating the explosives by sending a signal from a cellular phone; that the participants in the terrorist plot would be armed with AK-47 and Mac-10 machine guns which would be supplied by Romero's street gang, and they would be directed to use the machine guns to shoot any police officers that interfered with the plan; and that he had spoken to Individual A recently and Individual A had stated that he had not had any change of heart about moving ahead with the terrorist plot.

The JTTF, led by the FBI, is comprised of the following law enforcement agencies: the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Marshal's Service, Chicago Police Department, Federal Protective Service, Cook County Sheriff's Department, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Illinois State Police, Department of Defense, and the Department of Homeland Security.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Siskel.

If convicted, each count carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, the Court would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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